

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-6 and 8-31 are pending herein. Claim 1 has been amended hereby to clarify specific structural features of the piezoelectric/electrostrictive device recited therein. Applicants respectfully submit that support for rewritten claim 1 can be found in Fig. 27 of the present application, for example, and that no new matter has been added.

1. Applicants appreciate the PTO indicating that claims 3 and 13-31 are allowed. In addition to these allowed claims, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 2, 4-6 and 8-12 are also in condition for allowance for the reasons explained below. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the PTO issue a Notice of Allowance for this application in due course.

2. Claims 1, 2, 6, 8, 9 and 12 were rejected under §103(a) over Sakaida in view of Takeuchi '612. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Independent claim 1 recites a piezoelectric/electrostrictive film type actuator comprising, among other things, a ceramic substrate and a piezoelectric/electrostrictive device disposed on one surface of the ceramic substrate. The piezoelectric/electrostrictive device includes a plurality of piezoelectric/electrostrictive films and electrode films that are alternately laminated such that electrode films form uppermost and lowermost layers of the piezoelectric/electrostrictive device. The thickness of the piezoelectric/electrostrictive device, when viewed in cross-section, decreases from a central portion thereof toward opposed outer portions thereof. The upper surface of the piezoelectric/electrostrictive device, when viewed in cross-section, has a convex arcuate shape, where the radius of curvature of the convex arcuate shape originates from a point located below the one surface of the ceramic substrate.

Applicants respectfully submit that none of the applied references disclose or suggest a piezoelectric/electrostrictive device having the structural features now

recited in claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1 and all claims depending directly or indirectly therefrom define patentable subject matter over the applied references. Applicants respectfully request that the above rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

3. Claims 4 and 5 were rejected under §103(a) over Sakaida in view of Nishimura. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claims 4 and 5 each depend directly from independent claim 1, which is discussed in section 2 above. Since claim 1 defines patentable subject matter over the applied references for the reasons explained above, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 4 and 5 likewise define patentable subject matter at least by virtue of their respective dependency from claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the above rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

4. The §103(a) rejection of dependent claims 10 and 11 over Sakaida in view of Takeuchi '857 is noted, but deemed moot for the same reasons explained in section 3 above. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the above rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

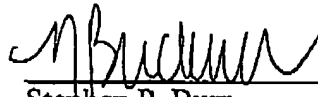
If the Examiner believes that contact with Applicants' attorney would be advantageous toward the disposition of this case, the Examiner is herein requested to call Applicants' attorney at the phone number noted below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees associated with this communication or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-1446.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date



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